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Canada

Kosher Foods

Kosher Food Market in Canada 2005

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Report Highlights:

The U.S. is the largest kosher food supplier to Canada. The Canadian market presents excellent opportunities for U.S. kosher producers.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
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Section I. Summary

- The Canadian kosher food market presents excellent opportunities for U.S. kosher producers. The Canadian kosher market is growing as can be seen by the number of large companies under kosher supervision, the increased availability and variety of kosher-certified products and the expansion of kosher departments in supermarkets.
- The traditional kosher consumer as well as those looking for safety reassurances, those with religious and dietary needs, and the increased availability of variety, are driving the kosher market in Canada.
- A USDA commissioned study from 2002 indicated that kosher food sales in Canada totaled \$575 million, and industry sources suggest that annual retail kosher food sales since that time have continued to strengthen.
- In addition to those products that are displayed in the kosher aisles of major supermarkets, many national brand foods marketed to the general public also have kosher certification. It has been estimated that as much as 65 percent of the food on grocery shelves is kosher.
- Kosher products are most readily available at the retail level. Supermarkets, club warehouse stores in areas with Jewish and Muslim communities, bakeries, butchers, delicatessens and small independent kosher grocery stores, are among the most popular outlets for kosher foods. Loblaw's, Canada's largest supermarket chain, has reportedly introduced more than 1,300 kosher products under its President's Choice and No-Name Labels.
- Kosher food buyers seek similar products to mainstream shoppers. Kosher shoppers are looking for convenient meal solutions, snacks, and healthy and nutritious foods of all types.
- Kosher products in the Canadian market are mainly imported from the United States, followed by Israel. Successful exporters of U.S. kosher foods usually deal directly with Canadian retailers and kosher food distributors.
- Major categories of domestically produced kosher products include: poultry, fish, bakery and dairy products.

The following table illustrates some of the advantages and challenges facing U.S. exporters in the Canadian market:

Advantages	Challenges
U.S. companies are reliable suppliers of high-quality, innovative kosher products.	Many kosher consumers prefer locally or regionally produced products.
Particularly during the religious holiday seasons, there are often insufficient supplies and varieties of kosher products to meet consumer demand.	Canadian Tariff Rate Quotas for poultry and dairy products inhibit exports of some of these foods to Canada. Once the quota limit is reached, imported product is subject to high tariffs.
Kosher-certified foods are becoming more popular with mainstream consumers and standard products on supermarket shelves.	Canadian domestic producers of dairy, eggs and poultry are the main source of product due to the high rate of duty on imported product over the Tariff Rate Quote allowance.
The United States has a competitive advantage because the North American Free Trade Agreement has made most products duty-free for NAFTA countries.	The food safety and health advantages of kosher foods are unknown to most Canadians. Therefore, U.S. exporters need to promote the benefits of kosher foods in the mainstream market.
Transportation costs are low compared to other countries.	

Section II. Kosher Certification Acceptance/Preference

To be recognized as kosher, products must have a kashruth authority or rabbinical council's official identification symbol or certification located on the product's package. There are a number of kosher certification authorities in Canada, each with its own rabbinical staff. For the most part, kosher-observant consumers in each area have developed a preference for the locally certified products, and they tend to remain faithful to those products. The most popular and well-known Canadian symbols are the COR for Toronto and the MK for Montreal. Certifications of recognized kashruth or rabbinical councils in the United States are also considered acceptable in Canada. Place of origin is important as well. Shoppers look for the names of cities in the United States with large Jewish populations, and recognizable and familiar local kosher supervisory organizations.

Although kosher-certification identifies a product's religious significance, for many consumers it also serves as a kind of quality seal of approval, especially for those that are food-label savvy. For example, when a kosher-certified food product is labeled pareve, knowledgeable consumers understand that the product is vegetarian, dairy-free and meat-free without having to examine its label thoroughly.

To export kosher products to Canada, exporters must first submit a kosher certificate for rabbinic approval. There are approximately 50 – 60 supervisory boards in Canada. A listing of major Canadian kashruth authorities and the major U.S. kashruth authorities sanctioned in Canada follows below.

Major Kosher Certifying Bodies



The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (OU)
Eleven Broadway, New York, NY 10004
(212) 563-4000, Fax - (212) 564-9054
Eleven Broadway, New York, NY
10004 (212) 563-4000, Fax - (212) 564-9054
Rabbi Menachem Genack, Rabbinic Administrator
Kashrus Questions Hotline: (212) 613-8241
Email: kosherq@ou.org or bergc@ou.org
Website: <http://www.ou.org>
New Companies: birnbaum@ou.org



The Organized Kashrus Laboratories (OK)
391 Troy Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11213
(718) 756-7500, Fax - (718) 756-7503
Rabbi Don Yoel Levy, Kashruth Administrator
E-Mail: General: info@ok.org Info on Certification: cfogelman@ok.org
Website: <http://www.ok.org>



"Star-K" Kosher Certification (STAR-K)
122 Slade Avenue, Suite 300, Baltimore, MD 21208
(410) 484-4110, Fax - (410) 653-9294
Rabbi Moshe Heinemann, Rabbinic Administrator
Dr. Avrom Pollak, President
E-Mail: star-k@star-k.org
Website: <http://www.star-k.org/>



Star-D Kosher Supervision of the National Council of the Young Israel
(STAR-D)
A project of the National Young Israel in affiliation with Star-K Kosher Certification
(410) 484-4110, Fax - (410) 653-9294
E-Mail: star-d@star-k.org
Website: <http://www.star-k.org/>



"KOF-K" Kosher Supervision (KOF-K)
201 The Plaza, Teaneck, NJ 07666
(201) 837-0500, Fax - (201) 837-0126
Rabbi Dr. H. Zecharia Senter, Executive Administrator
Rabbi Aharon Felder, Director of Kosher Standards
E-Mail: info@kof-k.org
Website: <http://www.kof-k.org>

Canadian Kosher Certifying Bodies

Alberta



Calgary Kosher (CK)
1607 - 90th Avenue S.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2V 4V7
403-253-8600 Ext 213, Fax - 403-253-7915
Rabbi Akeyv Greenblatt, Rabbinic Administrator
Philip Wolf, Mashgiach
E-Mail: calgarykosher@cjcc.ca

British Columbia



Orthodox Rabbinical Council of British Columbia
8080 Francis Road, British Columbia, Canada V6Y 1A4
(604) 275-0042, Fax: (604)277-2225
Rabbi A. Feigeistock, Av Beth Din
Rabbi Levy Teitlebaum, Kashrus Administrator
E-Mail: info@bckosher.org
Website: <http://www.bckosher.org>

Manitoba



Vaad Ha'ir of Winnipeg
C306 - 123 Doncaster St, Winnipeg, MB R3N 2B2
204-487-9571, Fax: 204-477-7405
Richard A. Stokoloff, Executive Director
Gabe Brojges, Kashruth Coordinator
E-Mail: RStokoloff@aspercampus.mb.ca

Ontario



Ottawa Vaad HaKashrut
780 Kerr Avenue, Ottawa Ontario, Canada K2A 1R9
(613) 798-4696, Fax: (613) 798-4695
Rabbi Mitchell R. Cohen, Director of kashrut
E-Mail: mcohen@jccottawa.com



Kashruth Council of Canada
4600 Bathurst St, Suite 240, Toronto, Ont. M2R 3V2
(416) 635-9550, Fax: (416) 635-8760
Rabbi M. Levin, Executive Director
Rabbi Y. Kerzner, Chairman Rabbinical Vaad Hakashruth
E-Mail: mlevin@cor.ca
Website: <http://www.cor.ca>

Quebec



Chief Rabbinate of Quebec - Kashruth Commission
 5850, Victoria Ave., Montreal, Quebec, H3W 2R5
 (514) 738-1004, Fax: (514) 738-2972
 Rabbi Dr. David Sabbah, Chief Rabbi/Posek
 Mr. Robert Levy, Administrator
 E-Mail: rabbidavid.sabbah@rabbinat.qc.ca
 Website: <http://www.rabbinat.qc.ca>



Jewish Community Council of Montreal
 6825 Decarie Blvd, Montreal, Quebec, H3W 3E4
 (514) 739-6363, Fax: (514) 739-7024
 Rabbi Saul Emanuel, Executive Director
 Rabbi Peretz Jaffe, Kashrut Coordinator
 E-Mail: semanuel@mk.ca
 Website: <http://www.mk.ca>
 Source: Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development, August 18, 2004.

Section III. Consumption and Market Sectors

Consumption

Reportedly 68% of Canadians are concerned about the quality and safety of what they eat and many are turning to kosher foods as a means of assurance. This segment of quality/safety-conscious consumers makes up much of the kosher market.

Factors influencing the increased demand for kosher food products are reported to include the following:

- Widespread concern about food safety and healthy eating by Canadians in general
- The assurance provided to vegetarian and lactose-intolerant consumers that kosher-certified pareve foods contain neither meat nor dairy product ingredients
- Increased interest in kosher products among various religious groups (e.g., Hindus, Muslims and Seventh-day Adventists)
- Increased availability of kosher products throughout the retail sector

According to 2005 Jewish Virtual Library data, the number of Canadians of the Jewish faith is approximately 394,000. Of these, 38 percent live in the Toronto area, followed by 23 percent in Montreal.¹

There are reportedly 580,000 Canadians of the Muslim faith² and it has been estimated that there are now more than one million immigrants of Arab origin in Canada. Although halal food is often their food of choice, halal foods are not as readily available, and many choose kosher.

¹ Source: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html>

Among Jews who do not purchase kosher products on a regular basis, consumption of kosher food peaks during Jewish holidays in the spring and in the fall, as well as special celebratory occasions.

Market Sectors

Retail

Trends in the Canadian kosher food market mirror those in the traditional retail sector. They include products that offer convenience, ethnic diversity, portability, and nutritious meal solutions.

Kosher products are most readily available at the retail level. Loblaw's, Canada's largest supermarket chain, has reportedly introduced more than 1,300 kosher products under its President's Choice and No-Name Labels. At least 10 outlets in Ontario and Quebec have full kosher departments, including kosher bakeries, butcher shops and deli counters with full-time kosher-dairy supervision on-site. Some of those stores offer kosher catering and cooking classes, as well. The in-store kitchens are cleansed and kosherized according to kosher laws, separate dishes are used for meat and dairy foods, and operations shut down for the Sabbath.

Sobeys', the third largest Canadian grocery chain also has a greatly expanded kosher aisle, and it is reported that a Sobeys' store in the Toronto area of Thornhill is almost exclusively kosher. The store employs its own rabbi and kosher inspectors on-site, and it attracts a wide array of shoppers including Jews, Muslims, other religious groups and vegetarians from the greater Toronto area, across Ontario and Quebec.

In addition to the products displayed in the kosher aisles of major supermarkets, many national brand foods marketed throughout the stores are kosher-certified. It has been estimated that as much as 65 percent of the food on grocery shelves is kosher.

Successful exporters of U.S. kosher foods commonly deal directly with Canadian kosher food distributors and retailers. For lists of local retail establishments, refer to the various rabbinical council web sites.

Packaging & Labeling Requirements

Although kosher requirements are not monitored by Canada's food and drug regulations or the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, kosher food products must adhere to the same packaging and labeling regulations as all other packaged food products sold at retail in Canada. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has prepared a Guide to Food Labeling and Advertising, which details the regulatory requirements for selling packaged foods in Canada. The CFIA Guide includes information on:

- Basic Labeling Requirements
- Advertising Requirements
- Claims as to the Composition, Quality, Quantity and Origin of Foods
- Nutrient Content Claims
- Health-Related Claims
- Other Product Specific Requirements

The full guide is available on the CFIA website at:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/labeti/guide/toce.shtml>

In January 2003, Canada amended its *Food and Drug Regulations* to require mandatory Nutrition Labeling. The Regulations also set out requirements for nutrient content claims, health claims and the requirements for the use of Nutrition Facts tables.

² Source: Statistics Canada Census data, 2001

For most foods subject to this legislation, the requirements come into force December 12, 2005. On this date foods should carry a Nutrition Facts table in the Canadian format (the use of the U.S. Nutrition panel is not permitted on prepackaged foods sold in Canada). For foods produced by small manufacturers with total annual sales of less than \$1.0 million for the 12-month period prior to December 12, 2002, the regulations come into force on December 12, 2007.

Health Canada website on Nutrition Labeling:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/index_e.html

In the labeling, packaging and advertising of a food, Canada's Food and Drug Regulations prohibit the use of the word "kosher", or any letter of the Hebrew alphabet, or any other word, expression, depiction, sign, symbol, mark, device or other representation that indicates or is likely to create an impression that the food is kosher, if the food does not meet all kosher requirements.

The best approach for U.S. exporters to access the Canadian kosher food market is through direct contact with distributors, retailers, and the various local rabbinical councils and Jewish information centers. The Kashruth Council of Canada has published a directory that lists the primary kosher food retailers, manufacturers and suppliers in Canada, to help consumers and business in their search for kosher-certified product. www.cofc.ca. On a regular basis, the kashruth councils provide local Jewish communities with lists of acceptable kosher certified brand name foods.

Kosher Food Distributors and Importers in Canada

Chai Kosher Poultry Inc. 115 Saulter St. S. Toronto, Ontario M4M 3K8 Tel.: 416-462-1313 Fax: 416-462-1758	Marcee's Sweets 2861 Danforth Avenue Toronto, Ontario M4C 1M2 Tel.: 416-694-5811 Fax: 416-694-6478
Hahamovitch Kosher Imports 6600 Thimens Blvd. Villes St. Laurent, Quebec H4S 1S5 ATTN: Michael Zimman Tel.: 514-334-4750 Fax: 514-334-4385	Marvin Poultry Packers Canada, Inc. 5671 Industrial Blvd. Montreal, Quebec H1G 3Z9 Tel.: 514-321-8376 Fax: 514-329-4568
Isaac's Bakery Ltd. 3390 Bathurst Toronto, Ontario M6A 2B9 Tel.: 416-789-7587 Fax: 416-789-7620	Middle East Nutritious Food Corp. 2180 Highway 7, Unit 27 Concord, Ontario L4K 1W6 Tel.: 416-661-2075 Fax: 905-738-3708
Jerusalem Pita/Toronto Bagel Ltd. 680 Steeprock Drive Downsview, Ontario M3J 2X1 Tel.: 416-398-7900 Fax: 416-398-4377	Smoked Fish Factory 501 Garryrae Drive Weston, Ontario M9L 1P9 Tel.: 416-745-4323 Fax: 416-745-5297
Kofman Barenholtz Foods Ltd. 69 Viceroy Rd. Concord, Ontario L4K 2L6 Tel.: 905-669-5393 Fax: 905-669-6983	Stern's Cholov Yisroel Kosher Products 788 Champagneur Street Montreal, Quebec H2V 3P8 Tel.: 514-277-0425 Fax: 514-277-5728
Lechner Bakery Inc. 50 Drumlin Circle Concord, Ontario L4K 3G1	Stroli's Strictly Kosher Foods 3459 Bathhurst Street Toronto, Ontario

Tel.: 905-738-8811 Fax: 905-738-3822	Tel.: 416-789-5333
Lieberman Splendid Chocolates 896 Eglinton Avenue W Toronto, Ontario M9L 1P9 Tel.: 416-782-6997 Fax: 416-745-5297	

Wine/spirits:

A Liquor Control Board for each province strictly controls the importation and sale of all alcoholic beverages in Canada. In Ontario, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) is the responsible authority for the province. There are approximately 600 LCBO stores in operation in Ontario. For a product to be carried by the LCBO it must be "listed" and must also have a registered agent to provide marketing support. The LCBO Product Management Committee reviews applications submitted by the agents/suppliers and makes decisions on the listing of products.

Finding an agent/distributor is an important first step in exporting wine to Ontario. Agents who represent manufacturers/suppliers of wine for sale in Ontario must be licensed under the Liquor License Act of Ontario. These agents are knowledgeable about the Liquor License Act and its regulations, and they are invaluable guides through the exporting process. The Liquor License Act R.S.O. 1990, C.L. 19 is available from: Publications Ontario, 50 Grosvenor Street, Toronto, Ontario M7A 1N8, Telephone: 800-668-9938.

In 2005, LCBO stores carried over 80 kosher products. LCBO's kosher assortment includes red, white and rose table wines, as well as flavored, fortified, dessert and sparkling wines from Israel, Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, France, Hungary, Italy, South Africa, California and New York State. There is also an assortment of spirits, including brandy, vodka and liqueurs. For more information contact the Category Manager of LCBO at:

Liquor Control Board of Ontario web site: <http://www.lcbo.com>
Contact information: Leanne Doggett, LCBO Category Manager, Kosher Products
LCBO Corporate Communications
55 Lake Shore Boulevard East
Toronto, ON M5E 1A4
Tel: 416 864-6721

Food Service

In addition to the increased availability of fresh and packaged kosher foods in the retail sector, there is also a trend toward greater availability of kosher foods in the food service sector. Jewish communities in most major cities offer consumers a wide variety of combination bakery/restaurants or delicatessen-style restaurants aimed at kosher food diners. In Toronto and Montreal, several major hotels offer separate kosher kitchens for banquets and meetings. Other hotels, through special arrangement, will permit facilities to be used for kosher functions by a kosher caterer certified by the local rabbinical council. Most of the local kashruth councils offer lists of kosher food service establishments in their respective jurisdictions. Refer to the list of kosher supervisory councils for web pages and contact information.

Some of the Canadian food service institutions that are under kosher supervision include airline and rail meal services, caterers, bakeries, camps, schools, day care centers, resorts, restaurants, cafes, hotels, banquet halls, senior services residences and hospitals.

Section IV. Promotional Activities

USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service endorses and organizes a US pavilion at the International Canadian Food & Beverage Show (CF&BS) each year in Toronto. The CF&BS is Canada's largest foodservice show attended by approximately 10,000 buyers and 350 exhibitors. The next show is scheduled for February 19-21, 2006.

Another trade show USDA/FAS endorses is SIAL Montreal, which also features a U.S. Pavilion. Approximately 15,000 buyers and 700 exhibitors attend this bi-annual, three-day show. The next show is scheduled for March 28-30, 2007.

Many Canadian companies exhibit at Kosherfest (held annually in New York during the fall), and many Canadian buyers of kosher products also attend the show.

For more information on trade shows contact Marilyn Bailey at marilyn.bailey@usda.gov

Section V. Post Contact and Further Information

For further information please contact the Office of Agricultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy, Canada, P.O. Box 5000, Ogdensburg, NY 13669-0430, telephone: 613-688-5267, fax: 613-688-3124, email:

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